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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001818

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM SOCI IT EUN UNICEF UN

SUBJECT: SICHAN SIV ROME MEETINGS CONCERNING UNGASS ON CHILDREN

REF: STATE 66892

CLASSIFIED BY: POLMINCOUN TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON 1.5 (B), (D)

1. (SBU) ACCOMPANIED BY POLOFFS, AMBASSADOR TO THE UN  
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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL SICHAN SIV AND L/HRR MICHAEL DENNIS MET 4/10 WITH OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRIES OF LABOR/WELFARE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO DISCUSS ISSUES BEFORE THE 5/8-10 UN SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN (REF). BOTH OF THEIR LABOR/WELFARE MINISTRY INTERLOCUTORS (UNDERSECRETARY GRAZIA SESTINI AND DIPLOMATIC COUNSELOR ALBERTO COLELLA) WILL BE MEMBERS OF THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO THE SPECIAL SESSION. OF THEIR MFA INTERLOCUTORS -- CLAUDIO BISOGNIERO, RAFAELE DI LUTIO, EMANUELE PIGNATELLI -- THE LATTER WILL BE THE SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL IN THE DELEGATION.

2. (C) AMBASSADOR SIV SAID THAT, WHILE THE U.S. CAN ACCEPT THAT THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD CONTAINS STANDARDS OF IMPORTANCE, IT COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT THE CONVENTION ESTABLISHED THE STANDARD FOR ACTIONS CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN. HE SAID THE U.S. SENATE IS CONSIDERING RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION'S TWO OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS, AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HOPED TO SECURE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO RATIFICATION BEFORE THE START OF THE SPECIAL SESSION. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT VARIOUS SENATORS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE CONVENTION ITSELF. REFERRING TO THE SESSION'S OUTCOME DOCUMENT, AMBASSADOR SIV SAID THE USG CANNOT ACCEPT THE PHRASE "REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES" SINCE OTHER DELEGATIONS HAVE ASSERTED THAT THIS REFERS TO ABORTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE NOTED, "REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE" IS FINE, IF NOT LINKED TO THE PREVIOUS UN CONFERENCE OUTCOME DOCUMENTS FROM CAIRO ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND FROM BEIJING ON WOMEN. AMBASSADOR SIV WELCOMED LANGUAGE IN THE 3/18 TEXT PROPOSED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AS A GOOD BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION. MR. DENNIS FURTHER CLARIFIED SPECIFIC CHANGES THAT THE U.S. WOULD NEED  
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TO THE DRAFT TEXT CONCERNING REFERENCES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT AND ON THE SALE OF CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION, AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.

3. (C) WHILE OFFICIALS AT BOTH MINISTRIES WERE FORTHCOMING, LABOR/WELFARE UNDERSECRETARY SESTINI SAID UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT ITALY SHARES U.S. VIEWS ON ABORTION AND WOULD SUPPORT OUR OPPOSITION TO "REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES." UNDERSECRETARY SESTINI NOTED A DIFFERENCE WITH U.S. VIEWS REGARDING HEALTH. WHEREAS U.S. LAW GUARANTEES CITIZENS "ACCESS" TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE, THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES CITIZENS A "RIGHT" TO HEALTH. THE GOI DELEGATION TO THE SPECIAL SESSION ACCORDINGLY WILL SEEK LANGUAGE ON THIS POINT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH NATIONAL LAW.

4. (C) COMMENT: AS AN ELECTED SENATOR (AND MEMBER OF THE SAME FORZA ITALIA PARTY AS PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI), UNDERSECRETARY SESTINI'S SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION ON ABORTION CAN BE CONSIDERED DEFINITIVE OF GOI VIEWS. THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO THE SPECIAL SESSION IS TO BE HEADED BY LABOR/WELFARE MINISTER ROBERTO MARONI. SHOULD DOMESTIC EVENTS PRECLUDE MARONI FROM ATTENDING, HOWEVER, SENATOR SESTINI IS LIKELY TO HEAD THE DELEGATION IN HIS PLACE.

5. (C) OTHER ISSUES: AMB. SIV THANKED DEPUTY POLITICAL DIRECTOR BISOGNIERO FOR ITALY'S DECISION TO POSTPONE ITS CANDIDACY FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, OPENING THE PATH FOR THE U.S. TO RETURN. BISOGNIERO NOTED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO PRIME MINISTER (AND ACTING FM) BERLUSCONI THAT THE U.S. RETURN. HE HOPED THE U.S. WOULD URGE THOSE  
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COUNTRIES THAT STILL HAD OBJECTIONS TO THE ICELANDIC PROPOSAL FOR WEOG ROTATION TO "CALM DOWN" AND ACCEPT THE PLAN. BISOGNIERO ALSO HANDED OVER A NOTE VERBALE REQUESTING THE U.S. TO SUPPORT THE ITALIAN CANDIDACY FOR THE COMMISSION FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND PENAL JUSTICE IN THE ELECTIONS IN ECOSOC 4/29-30.  
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